that for provision of subsidies. The total amount of RE subsidy and grants as provided in the Annual Accounts of 16 SEBs for the year 1997-98 is Rs. 10,026.10 crores.

(b) The Central Government has enacted Electricity Regulatory Commission Act, 1998 which *inter-alia,* provides for establishment of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) at the national level and State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERCs) at the state level with a view to *inter-alia* rationalise the electricity tariff. The Act also provides that if a State Government requires grant of a subsidy to a class of consumers, it would be required to pay the amount involved in such manner as directed by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Conservation of energy

5592. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that conservation of energy is an important factor of national policy as it has great potential to reduce the shortage of power in the country, but it has not been adequately discriminated; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to implement such a programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) and (b) The efficient use of energy and its conservation, being the least cost option for reducing the gap between demand and supply and environmental pollution, is an important component of National Policy. Energy Conservation has been on the Government's agenda for over two decades. Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) was set up in 1976, Energy Conservation Cell was set up in the Ministry of Power in 1985 and Energy Management Centre (EMC) was set up in 1989 and acts as a focal point for all energy efficiency related activities and implementing schemes on energy efficiency and its conservation. The agencies engaged in the area of energy conservation are carrying out energy conservation programmes in almost all States and UTs.

The Government has introduced the Energy Conservation Bill, 2000 in the Lok Sabha on 24.2.2000. It *inter- alia* provides for the establishment of Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), laying down standards and norms on energy consumption for specified equipments and appliances, introducing compulsory labelling for equipments and appliances and making energy audit

mandatory for designated consumers to promote the efficient use of energy and its conservation.

Recovery of dues from SEBs and Power Grid Corporation

5593. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of outstanding dues to be recovered by NTPC from State Electricity Boards, or Power grid Corporation, as on 31st December, 1999 with details thereof, State-wise;

(b) whether Government have taken action against the States for not clearing the outstanding amount; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the State Governments thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI MEHTA): (a) The total outstanding dues payable by State Electricity Boards (SEBs)/Union Territories (UTs) etc. to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) stand at Rs. 12424.30 crores as on 31.12.1999 including surcharge of Rs.4440.67 crores. State/SEB-wise details of dues are given in the enclosed Statement. *(See* below)

(b) The NTPC and Government are taking up various actions/measures for recovery of outstanding dues of NTPC as indicated below:—

(i) The NTPC Management is pursuing recovery of dues with concerned SEBs/State Government.

(ii) The Special Incentive Scheme has been introduced by NTPC since September, 1994 to provide incentive to States which establish Letter of Credits (LC) to c.over full amount of current monthly bills. By enhancing their LC to the required level, SEBs would be in a position to avail 2.5% rebate on payments made in four equated weekly instalments and also obtain reimbursement of charges incurred for LC operation.

(iii) NTPC at times also resorts to regulation of power to the defaulting States.

(iv) In case of new projects, NTPC is making efforts for payments safeguards in the Power Purchase Agreements signed for its new projects. These include back up of State Government guarantee for the LC.